



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF TEWKSBURY
TOWN HALL
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MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 26, 2015

Chairperson Todd Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present for the Board of Selectmen meeting were Bruce Panilaitis, David Gay, James Wentworth and Mark Kratman. Also present was Town Manager, Richard Montuori.

NMCOG—Hazard Mitigation & Regional Dispatch

Beverly Woods, Executive Director, presented on behalf of Northern Middlesex Council of Government.

Hazard Mitigation Plan

Ms. Woods noted that every community is required to have a Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to receive FEMA Funding. Tewksbury is fortunate to have four projects with approved funding from FEMA. The Selectmen need to approve the plan to be acceptable to the FEMA. NMCOG has been working since 2011 with nine communities and needs to be updated every five years. The planning team is comprised of municipal staff across all nine communities of NMCOG, which include public safety officials, local planning officials, engineering staff, DPW staff and emergency management staff along with input from residents and business community. Public meetings were held in all communities to review the plan as presented tonight.

The plan explains what areas in town are vulnerable to natural hazards, how to be proactive in preventing a natural hazard, and what can be done to mitigate these hazards and prevent loss of life. All communities who participated made significant progress in their own plans. An action plan was included at the end of the document. Projects listed in the action plan were based on a consensus and prioritized by cost, availability of funding, and political acceptance for the measures noted, i.e. if the project was doable in the next 5 years. Projects listed were 1) installing back up pump and generator at the East Street pump station, 2) install emergency backup pumps at all sewer stations, and 3) check snow loads for roofs at municipal buildings.

Once the hazard mitigation plan is adopted, the planning team will meet annually to facilitate and review the plan. The Selectmen are not obligated to implement all the measures listed in the plan but it should be viewed as a goal.

Ms. Woods reiterated that due to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, it is required that every community address hazard mitigation and without a plan the town will not be eligible to receive federal grant money. All of the communities within NMCO are favorable to adopt the plan as presented to the Selectmen. It is a prudent action to take. Tewksbury would be the third community to adopt this plan if it moves forward. The projects listed would not be a high cost to the town, but would be an item the town would normally address.

MOTION: Mr. Gay made the motion to adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan as presented and recommended by NNMCOG; seconded by Mr. Wentworth and the motion carried 5-0.

Regional Dispatch Center

Present for this portion of the agenda were Ms. Beverly Woods, Executive Director of NMCOG; Mr. Jay Donovan, Assistant Director of NMCOG; and Mr. Tom Kennedy of Center for Technology Commercialization (CTC). Mr. Kennedy is a consultant working with NMCOG on the regional dispatch effort.

The Chair recognized the interested parties in the room and stated that this decision is governed by the Chapter 500 of the Acts of 2014. The statute states the local governing body, the Board of Selectmen, shall make the decision. There is nothing that mandates the subject be treated as a public hearing. He made note the topic will be treated as a presentation and not a public hearing. As a courtesy, Mr. Johnson offered a representative from the group of dispatchers present would have an opportunity to give the perspective of the dispatchers on this matter to the Selectmen.

Mr. Montuori introduced the subject and stated it has been in the works since 2009. Area communities have been investigating the regional dispatch center. The remaining communities interested in pursuing a regional center are Chelmsford, Dracut and Tewksbury. He also noted a regional center can provide a benefit financially as well as a state of the art facility with better training. Chiefs Hazel and Sheehan were also present for this discussion and have been active in the development process. Tewksbury has also worked closely with Chelmsford and Dracut on the development of the center.

Feasibility Study

- Initiated in 2009 at the request of the managers/administrators to assess the feasibility of consolidating 911 dispatch services in Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Lowell, Pepperell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and Westford.
- NMCOG applied for and received a grant from the State 911 Department to undertake a feasibility study.
- Concluded that consolidating 911 dispatch services would improve the quality of service for residents, while resulting in significant cost savings.
- A number of questions remained regarding personnel, budgeting, location of the facility and governance.
- CEOs in 7 of the 9 communities agreed to continue into the Implementation Planning Phase of the project.

Implementation Plan

- In 2013, NMCOG received a Development Grant from the State 911 Department to prepare an Implementation Plan.
- 9 sites were investigated.
- A draft IMA was developed.
- Cost figures, budget information and staffing plans were further refined.
- Recommended that 7 communities consolidate 911 dispatch services; each community elected to continue with the study process.

Implementation Plan Update

- In 2014, NMCOG received a Professional Services Grant from the State 911 Department to examine:
 - The impact of Next Generation of 911;
 - The impact of sending all wireless calls to each community;
 - Identifying a preferred site for the RECC; and
 - Investigating options for the small communities
 - Refining the financial information, the IMA, and the staffing plan.

Chelmsford, Dracut and Tewksbury Consolidation

2014 Call Volumes

Community	911 Wireless	911 Wireline	Total
Chelmsford	2,748	3,545	6,293
Dracut	2,170	2,440	4,610
Tewksbury	2,265	3,741	6,006
Total	7,183	9,726	16,909

The impact of wireless calls are all calls going to Essex Regional Dispatch Center and then dispatched to the corresponding town.

Current Personnel On Duty

Dispatch Center	On Duty Days	On Duty Afternoon	On Duty Nights
Chelmsford Police	2	2	2
Tewksbury Police	2	2	2
Dracut Police*	2	2	1
Total	6	6	5

*Dracut Fire operates a secondary PSAP

Staffing the NMRECC

- 1 Executive Director
- 1 Administrative Assistant
- 21 Dispatchers
- 4.5 Working Supervisors (also manning a console)
- Personnel on duty each shift
 - 6-day shift (5 dispatchers and 1 supervisor)
 - 6-evening shift (5 dispatchers and 1 supervisor)
 - 5-overnight shift (4 dispatchers and 1 supervisor)

Annual Costs for the NMRECC

Item	Annual Cost Estimate
Operating Expenses	\$102,867
Personnel Expenses	\$2,002,482
Pre Grant-Total	\$2,105,349
State Grant*	\$393,490
Annual Budget	\$1,711,859

*Incentive grant from State 911 Department

Participation Ratios

USER Agency	911 Call Volume	911 Calls Only	Population	Population Only	50% 911 Calls 50% Population
Chelmsford	6,293	37.22%	33,802	36.66%	36.94%
Dracut	4,610	27.26%	29,457	31.94%	29.60%
Tewksbury	6,006	35.52%	28,961	31.40%	33.46%
TOTAL	16,909	100.00%	92,220	100.00%	100.00%

This formula is based on call volume.

Cost Savings with the NMRECC

	Recurring Cost Savings	(Minus - Current State Support)	Equipment capital expenses Savings	Total Savings
Chelmsford	51,349	(77,902)	137,714	\$ 111,161
Dracut	117,496	(60,857)	137,714	\$ 194,353
Tewksbury	199,603	(71,660)	103,285	\$ 231,228
Total	\$ 368,448	(\$ 210,419)	\$ 378,713	\$ 536,742

A support grant is subtracted out of this formula and added in to the formula is a yearly cost of equipment = \$231K savings for Tewksbury. The goal is to improve service—cost savings is not a priority.

Costs covered under the RECC Development Grant

- Architectural, engineering and design costs
- All building construction costs (materials, labor, and financing)
- All equipment for the RECC (radio systems, computers, consoles, CAD, RMS, fire alarm receiving and alerting, furnishings, etc.)
- Equipment at the PSAPs to communicate with the RECC
- The Executive Director's salary for one year before start up and the first year of operations

The State will not cover the cost of land.

Other Potential Future Revenue from Wireless Calls

- Wireless calls are now received by the Essex RECC and then transferred to each community
- Once the NMRECC is operating, there is an opportunity to directly receive the wireless calls
- With assistance from the State 911 Department, wireless calls received by Essex RECC were analyzed
- It is estimated that the NMRECC could receive \$550,875 to \$780,00 in additional revenues by receiving all wireless calls for Chelmsford, Dracut and Tewksbury, significantly reducing the costs for the communities

Governance of the RECC

- A District Agreement to be signed by each participating community
- Board of Directors-comprised of the Town Managers (one community, one vote)
- Finance Advisory Subcommittee (chief financial officer and chief administrative officer, as required under Chapter 500 of the Acts of 2014)
- Operations Committee-comprised of the police and fire chiefs
- Technology Subcommittee to manage and maintain technology and equipment

There is a strong opinion from the planning team that after the center is up and running there will be more communities interested in joining. It is recommended to bid construction with capacity to expand.

RECC Site Evaluation Process

- Three sites were evaluated-Tewksbury State Hospital, UMass Lowell West Campus and Tewksbury DPW land
- Used nationally accepted criteria and standards for evaluation process
- Tewksbury DPW land (899 Whipple Road) appears to be the most advantageous and is municipally owned

The site would be municipally owned and not needed to go through DCAM for approval.

Anticipated New Requirements for Local PSAPs

- A statewide Next Generation 911 system is on schedule to be implemented in Massachusetts by 2016 (FCC requirement).
- This is an IP based system and communities must have the capacity to not only handle 911 calls but to also receive transmitted texts, images, videos and data from the public.
- The state has developed a tool to assess the operational capacity of existing PSAPs in this regard.
- The state will be sending wireless 911 calls directly to the communities, significantly increasing call volumes as the ratio of wireless calls to landline calls increases.

Benefits of Establishing the NMRECC

- Enhance the quality of communication services for residents as part of a modern and efficient state-of-the-art facility
- Increase emergency communication capabilities and staffing capacity during large events and emergencies
- Cost savings for all three communities through greater economy of scale
- Future replacement of equipment will be funded by the State
- Enhanced information sharing between communities regarding crime patterns and activity
- Relieves local communities of dealing with new additional State and Federal requirements
- Establishes career path possibilities for dispatchers

Implementation

- Adopt District Agreement
- Apply for Design Funding and Executive Director's salary
- Hire Director, Begin Design Process, Establish SOP and Policies
- Begin Construction
- Complete Construction and Hire Personnel and Train Staff
- Cutover to RECC (2-3 year time frame)

Cost savings are very conservative; and feel confident that there will be a greater savings, but the team did not want to oversell it to the Selectmen. Other points were:

- A state grant will come in every year at \$350K
- There is confidence the grant will stay and funds will not dry up as it is paid by a surcharge on cell phone bills
- Essex would come into this regional center which was accounted for in the proposal and still the communities participating would gain a significant revenue
- All dispatchers hired would be paid at the highest salary at starting at \$49,000 and \$62,000 for supervisors; all administrative personal would be at their current salaries and the Executive Director would start at \$85,000.
- The regional dispatch center at Devens has been a very positive program for all communities and was a successful transition
- The proposal includes and covers a significant amount of the 21 positions that would be available for the current staff—the best would be hired for the job. The Town Manager did not want to guarantee everyone a job; but it is likely all Tewksbury employees would have a place in the new organization
- No current studies were provided on the level of service, but in general the service is better; and more staff is on hand
- Equipment for the center is paid for by the Commonwealth in the long term and the grant is written in by legislature
- There is a promotion by the Commonwealth to regionalize; so if funds are tighter than normal, a priority will be given to a regional center
- There are 6 regional centers in Massachusetts
- The Selectmen requested some discussion take place to cover the cost of the land, as the grant doesn't cover cost; if Tewksbury would be provider is there any way to split the cost of the land between all—it was believed there is incentive money from the grant for communities to participate

The representative for the Tewksbury Dispatchers was Matt Carapellucci, a resident for over 20 year and with 8 years experience came forward to speak on the behalf of the group. There were concerns and questions.

Concerning jobs, currently there are nine full-time dispatchers in Tewksbury and it would be a shame not to guarantee them a job or leave it to the best qualified candidates. The current staff has seen many residents at their worst and has helped them through. New dispatchers would not know the residents history or how to help them. The dispatchers are concerned on how minimum manning would work in order to cover vacations and paid time off, as there does not seem to be enough available positions in the new organization to cover. There is a deep concern for increases in response time, as many residents call and use historical landmarks (Purity Plaza) instead of street names that if you were not a seasoned dispatcher or resident of the town, it would delay response time. When dispatching, seconds count. The current dispatching staff sees issues that others may not see with Essex Regional Communications, such as dropping calls and transferring calls to wrong cities or towns. Dispatchers actually sent emergency response teams to wrong town from an Essex dispatcher. Essex Regional originally had 13 communities in house and now only works with 5 communities. Tewksbury should visit, observe and truly compare the operations currently in Essex. It has been in operation for 2 to 3 years and communities are backing out instead of joining in. The dispatchers also asked if the position of a police officer assigned to desk duty at the regional dispatch center to handle walk-ins, etc. If approved, it will take 2 to 4 years for the center to open. What is the plan if the current system fails during this transition? How will records be transferred as regional center would not use same system? These were questions that could not be answered immediately

but are being researched. Mr. Carapellucci noted that he is familiar with Essex because he works with them closely, but has not worked with other centers. .

Chief Sheehan responded to the questions and concerns. He recognized the work by the dispatchers in audience and promised to advocate for all to have jobs in the regional center. If the current staff were to pursue a position in the new center, there would be opportunities to move up in the ranks and work a different shift the current staff are relegated to certain shifts and don't have lateral mobility. There are several other benefits; some mentioned and others not mentioned. The Chief also noted the same staffing would be in place, but if a shift can't be filed will use the current policy but turning to part-time employees and then order in employees as a last resort. On the topic of landmarks, because of modern technology these descriptions can be added in. He noted that individuals do not always come from the communities they are hired at and knowing the landmarks would be part of the training. Chief Sheehan would not accept the center as Essex has been described. Unfortunately Essex didn't run a center before it inherited one, but all communities currently pursuing the project have done so and a level of excellence is expected. The center will maintain a civilian presence to answer calls or walk-ins, etc. and may not need to pay as much for this employee as a civilian than as a dispatcher. Chief Sheehan feels the regional center is a good opportunity for the Town, his staff and the residents of Tewksbury.

Chief Hazel does see some negatives as mentioned, but felt these are all things that can be overcome. There is a bond that has developed over the years with the dispatchers and the police and fire staff. He hopes this will be maintained. All new fire employees meet with dispatchers when first on the job. He strongly advocates continuing to make the effort for this connection. Fire department does have a dispatch liaison now, and this should continue to move forward. Dispatchers are going to be supervised by dispatchers and should remain a team. If we turn into a regional center, we should not lose any local control of incidents.

Selectmen noted they are very proud public safety staff and have no concerns that members of the current staff would secure positions.

No other towns have voted to move forward. Chelmsford is meeting Monday, Aug 31st and Dracut is meeting on Thursday, September 8th. The vote is based on all three towns moving forward. The Selectmen consensus was to move forward with a confirmed commitment of the other communities.

MOTION: Mr. Wentworth made the motion to formalize the vote for a regional dispatch center for the Town of Tewksbury; seconded by Mr. Panilaitis and the motion carried 5-0.

MOTION: Mr. Wentworth proposed that shall the Town of Tewksbury accept the provisions of 180 to 18V, inclusive of Chapter 6A of the General Laws providing for the establishment of a regional 911 emergency communication district, together with the towns of Chelmsford and Dracut, and the construction or sitting, administration, operation and maintenance of a regional 911 emergency communication center by the district under the provisions of the proposed district agreement filed with the Board of Selectmen; the motion was seconded by Mr. Kratman and unanimously voted 5-0 by the Selectmen.

MOTION: Mr. Panilaitis made the motion to approve the agreement in current draft form to support the regional dispatch center, subject to final review of Town Counsel and Town Manager; seconded by Mr. Wentworth and the motion carried 5-0.

Peregrine's Landing—request for a One Day Beer & Wine License

Peregrine's Landing was waiting on an insurance binder and it was not received.

MOTION: Mr. Kratman made the motion to approve the one-day beer and wine license subject to appropriate paperwork and insurance binder being submitted properly to the Selectmen's office by Wednesday, September 2, 2015; seconded by Mr. Panilaitis and the motion carried 5-0.

TJ Callahan's—request One Day Beer & Wine License

MOTION: Mr. Gay made the motion to approve the one-day beer and wine license for Sunday, September 13, 2015 from 12-5 p.m. at 286 Livingston Street during the Annual Harvest Festival; seconded by Mr. Kratman and the motion carried 5-0.

Other Business

Appointments

The Economic Development Committee met with Town Manager and Community Development Director to consider another associate member position. The committee would like to appoint 2 of the 3 candidates for the open positions.

Mr. Wentworth was not in attendance for this vote at the last meeting and is in agreement to move the additional member position forward.

MOTION: Mr. Gay made the motion to expand the Economic Development Committee by one associate member who will be a non-voting member; seconded by Mr. Kratman and the motion carried 5-0.

MOTION: Mr. Panilaitis made the motion to appoint Ms. Diane LeBoeuf to the Economic Development Committee as a non-voting member effective immediately through June 30, 2016; seconded by Mr. Gay and the motion carried 4-0 with Mr. Wentworth not voting.

MOTION: Mr. Panilaitis made the motion to appoint Mr. Tom Branchaud to the Economic Development Committee effective immediately through June 30, 2016; seconded by Mr. Gay and the motion carried 5-0 with Mr. Wentworth voting as he knows Mr. Branchaud personally.

Mr. Montuori and Mr. Panilaitis drafted a letter to thank Jay Ash for meeting with them. The Selectmen agreed to execute the letter.

Executive Session—Collective Bargaining

MOTION: Mr. Gay made the motion for the Board to enter into Executive Session; Mr. Panilaitis seconded the motion, and on a roll call vote Mr. Wentworth, Mr. Gay, Mr. Kratman, Mr. Panilaitis, and Mr. Johnson vote in favor. The motion was unanimous and moved to Executive Session at 8:48 pm.

The purpose of Executive Session was to discuss a collective bargaining item.

MOTION: Mr. Gay made the motion for the Board to exit Executive Session at 9:04 p.m.; Mr. Panilaitis seconded, and on a roll call vote Mr. Panilaitis, Mr. Wentworth, Mr. Kratman, Mr. Gay, and Mr. Johnson vote in favor for a unanimous vote.

No other open business was discussed by the Selectmen at the conclusion of executive session.

The next meeting will be held on September 15, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Wentworth made the motion to adjourn at 9:04 p.m.; Mr. Gay seconded, and the motion carried 5 to 0.

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on September 29, 2015